

a community called ...

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“I AM AMAZED.”

A TRUE INCIDENT.

BY REV. G. H. SMITH, M.A.

THE longer I live the more I am convinced that facts are stranger than fiction, and that the supernatural has not wholly dropped out of religion.

I was once invited by a Christian physician to visit a medical student who was reported to be dying of consumption. His father was a so-called German infidel, and so, also, was the doctor at whose house he was staying.

I was told that it was doubtful if the young man would be willing to talk with me upon

the subject of religion, but that, since he could not get better, I ought to visit him. It must be confessed that I rang the door-bell of his residence with timidity, and with some curiosity as to how I should be received. The door was opened by the invalid himself who, to my surprise, welcomed me into the house, calling me by name.

He said that he had attended my church, usually sitting in the back seats, and that he liked to come.

“ Do you believe in religion ?” I inquired.

“ O yes, sir,” he answered, promptly. “ I believe in religion.”

“ Do you consider yourself a Christian ?”

“ I believe the Bible, and I believe in Christ ; but I do not suppose I am what you would call a Christian. I have never had a

change of heart. I have never been converted.”

“Would you like to be a Christian?” I asked.

“O yes,” he answered; “very much.”

“Then,” I said, “if you are ready to give up your sins, and your sinful ways, and accept Christ, you can be a Christian this very hour. Are you ready to give yourself to God now?”

Upon his answering that he was ready I said, “Let us kneel down and pray;” and I began, “O Lord God of the universe;” and, to my surprise, he repeated after me, “O Lord God of the universe;” “we bow before thee in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;” and he repeated the words after me, and so I continued, “that thou

wouldst accept me as thy child. I acknowledge that I am a great sinner; that I have done evil, times without number. Forgive all my sins, for Jesus' sake. Thou hast promised if any man come unto thee thou wilt in no wise cast him out, and now I come to thee and give thee my heart, my all, for time and eternity.”

After the young man repeated these words I turned to him and asked, “Do you mean what you say?” and he replied, “I mean it all.” So I led on, “I give up my sins. I accept thee hereafter forever—to be thy child and to do thy will. I surrender my will to thine; I give up my wicked ways; I give up my doubts, my distrust of thee, and, living or dying, I will be thine and thine only, God being my helper.”

After I had led him in the most solemn consecration of which I was capable, we arose from our knees. I looked into his eyes and said, "Do you mean now from this time on to be a Christian?"

He said that he did, and so I left him, wondering in my own mind whether he realized fully what he had been doing. A week from that time, on the way to see him again, I said to myself, Now I will try and find out two things: first, whether he realizes that he is not going to get well; and second, whether he really gave his heart to God and accepted Christ as his Saviour. I was no sooner seated than I asked him, "Can you give a diagnosis of your disease?"

"O yes," he replied. "I have made it a study for two years. I am coughing away a

vital organ, and I cannot live.” Then he went on, “Life seems very strange to me. I was brought up in a home of luxury. Until my mother died I never knew what trouble was. Then my father took to drinking, and the trouble which it brought on me has helped to develop this disease, and sent me here among strangers to die. A year ago I was an athlete. I could do the “giant-swing;” I could carry one hundred pounds in each hand up those stairs. Now I cannot ride a block in the street-cars without fainting. I have been very ambitious, and have just taken my diploma. I have studied very hard, and have just got started here, where the prospects seemed bright for me, when, although not quite twenty-one years of age, I must die.”

His conversation was so earnest that it thrilled me. Then he turned to me, and with unusual emphasis said: “Notwithstanding all this I am amazed. I can’t understand it. Since I gave my heart to God I have been happier than I ever was in all my life,” and he repeated again, “I am amazed. I cannot understand it.”

I also could say that I was amazed, and that I could not understand it either, but I know from ample observation and from experience that whosoever will confess his sins, and, forsaking them, will give himself to the Lord Jesus Christ, will receive full pardon, and such a blessing as only God can give.

I attended him for several months, until he died. His experience never wavered, it was bright to the end; and when we buried

him, all through the services—I shall never forget it—his ungodly father stood like a statue, looking intent upon the calm, sweet face of his boy in his coffin as though he would read there some solemn, holy lesson that words cannot utter, of the mystery of life and of death, and perchance of that other great mystery, the miracle of the life hid with Christ in God.

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